

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

S E C R E T LONDON 06531

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM, MBFR, UK

SUBJECT: MBFR: EC NINE EXPERTS MEETING

REF: (A) DUBLIN 731 (B) LONDON 6079

SUMMARY. TERENCE WOOD, UK PARTICIPANT IN APRIL 22 EC MBFR EXPERTS MEETING, REPORTS THAT MEETING COVERED LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE BUT UK JUDGED IT TO BE A SUCCESS BECAUSE IT DID PROVIDE A FORUM FOR FRENCH COMMENTS ON MBFR. WHILE THERE WILL BE NO INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THIS GROUP, UK EXPECTS THAT THERE WILL BE SIMILAR MEETINGS AT IRREGULAR

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INTERVALS IN FUTURE. AT INSISTENCE OF FRENCH, EXPERTS

DID NOT MAKE WRITTEN REPORT OF DISCUSSIONS TO POLITICAL DIRECTORS. END SUMMARY.

1. TERENCE WOOD OF FCO GAVE US A FULL BRIEFING ON EC MBFR EXPERTS MEETING IN DUBLIN APRIL 22. HE NOTED THAT THIS WAS THIRD MEETING OF THE GROUP, THE LAST HAVING TAKEN PLACE ALMOST A YEAR AGO. THE UK BELIEVES THAT THERE SHOULD BE A FORUM FOR EUROPEANS TO DISCUSS REGIONAL ASPECTS OF MBFR AND SO WERE PLEASED WHEN FRG AND ITALY SUGGESTED RE-CONVENING EXPERTS.

2. THE UK PAPER FOR THE MEETING (REF. B) WAS DESIGNED TO FOCUS THE ATTENTION OF THE GROUP ON EUROPEAN ASPECTS OF MBFR AND TO TRY TO PRECLUDE AN UNSTRUCTURED DISCUSSION WHICH MIGHT TOUCH ON SUBJECTS UK DID NOT WANT TO TALK ABOUT, I.E. OPTION III. THIS PLOY WAS NOT ENTIRELY SUCCESSFUL - BOTH FRENCH AND ITALIANS EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT NUCLEAR COMPONENT. ALL PARTICIPANTS COMMENDED UK PAPER BUT NONE DISCUSSED ITS SUBSTANCE IN DETAIL.

2. MOST INTERESTING PART OF MEETING FOR UK WAS FRENCH INTERVENTION. MISTRAL SAID HE WAS PLAYING ROLE OF DEVIL'S ADVOCATE. HE APPEARED TO TAKE FOR GRANTED FACT THAT NUCLEAR WEAPONS WOULD BE INCLUDED IN SETTLEMENT AND THOUGHT THAT THIS WOULD BE DAMAGING TO THE WEST. FRENCH ARE DISTURBED THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS SEEM TO BE LEADING TOWARD RIGID CONSTRAINTS ON A BROAD FRONT INCLUDING EQUIPMENT -- AND AWAY FROM THE ORIGINAL CONCEPT OF GROUND FORCES ONLY. THEY ALSO DISLIKE THE POSSIBILITY OF ACCEPTING CONTRACTUAL LIMITS ON EUROPEAN DEFENSE. FINALLY, THEY FEAR THAT THE WEST IS MOVING TOWARD AN UNVERIFIABLE AGREEMENT WHICH CAN ONLY BENEFIT THE EAST.

3. OTHER INTERESTING INTERVENTIONS WERE BY DUTCH AND ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVES. DUTCH HAD CONSULTED WITH UK MBFR COMMUNITY ON WAY TO DUBLIN -- DUTCH REP. TOOK STRONG STAND ON NEED TO AVOID NATIONAL SUB-CEILINGS. ITALIAN REP. DARIN SPOKE ON "THIRD OPTION" TO DISCOMFORT OF FRG AND UK REPS. DARIN ECHOED FRENCH CONCERN ABOUT NUCLEAR COMPONENT AND SPECULATED ON HOW NATO WOULD CONSULT ON THE

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QUESTION.

4. THE DANES, DUTCH AND GERMANS TOOK A STRONG STAND AGAINST INSTITUTIONALIZING THE MBFR EXPERTS GROUP. MISTRAL SAID HIS INSTRUCTIONS FORBADE EVEN A WRITTEN REPORT TO THE EC POLITICAL DIRECTORS. BUT ALL AGREED THAT THERE WAS MERIT IN MEETING AGAIN -- PROBABLY IN TWO OR THREE MONTHS.

5. WOOD SAID THAT UK FEELS THAT MEETING WAS A SUCCESS
EVEN THOUGH SUBSTANCE OF EUROPEAN ASPECTS OF MBFR WAS NOT
DISCUSSED IN DETAIL. FRENCH SEEMED TO WELCOME
OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS. IT IS GOOD TO HAVE
THEM ON RECORD. BRITISH WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT SUCH
MEETINGS WHILE WORKING TO ENSURE THAT THEY DO NOT
DUPLICATE WORK BEING DONE IN NATO. BRITISH ARE ALSO
MOST ANXIOUS TO AVOID ANY IMPRESSION THAT GROUP MIGHT
DEVELOP INTO A EC CAUCUS EXCLUDING U.S. AND CANADA WHICH
MIGHT BE SEEN TO BE CONSIDERING SEPARATE "EUROPEAN
POSITIONS" ON MBFR ISSUES. RICHARDSON

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